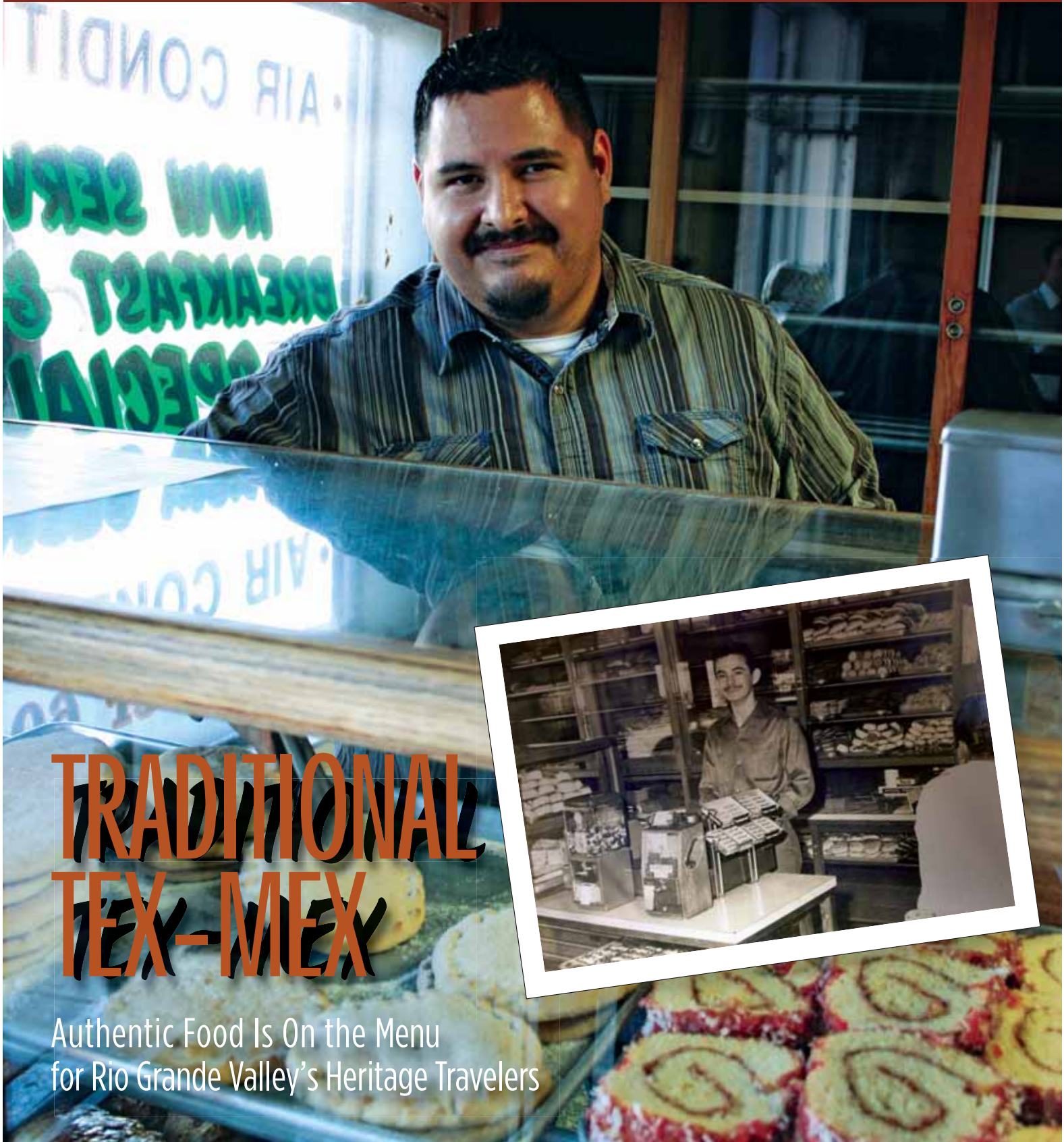


TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# THE MEDALLION

WINTER 2012



## TRADITIONAL TEX-MEX

Authentic Food Is On the Menu  
for Rio Grande Valley's Heritage Travelers



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**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

THE **MEDALLION**

WINTER 2012

**FEATURES**

- 4** Mid-Century  
Movement  
1960s architecture is  
reaching 50 years old.



**THC OUTREACH**

- 6** Tex Mex Combo  
Sample the Rio Grande  
Valley's traditional cuisine  
and historic restaurants.



- 10** High and Dry  
Texas' historic drought  
has exposed shipwrecks  
in rivers and lakes.

**ON THE COVER:**

Baldamar Guerrero Jr. (and his father, inset) at Rex Café in McAllen. Photo by Andy Rhodes.

**HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS**

**The Medallion Is Officially Historic!**

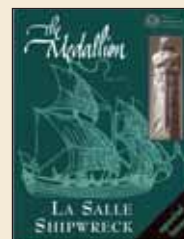
The Texas Historical Commission's venerable newsletter/magazine turns 50 years  
old in 2012. Take a look at how far we've come since 1962!



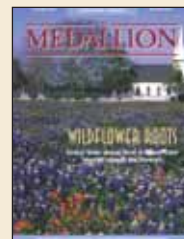
1968



1979



1995



2009

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# Designing History

## John S. Chase Was Texas' First Licensed African American Architect

*By Gregory Smith*  
*State National Register Program Coordinator*

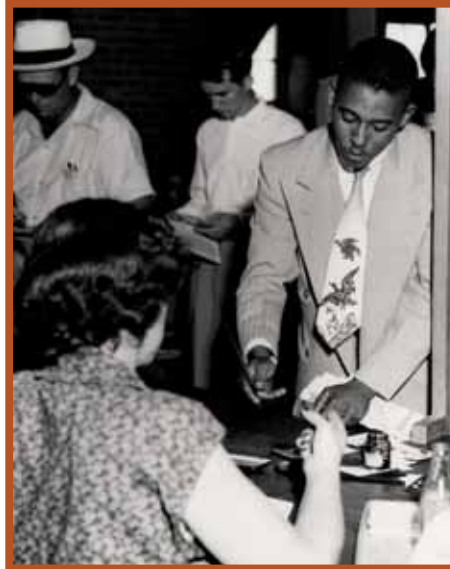
John Saunders Chase didn't have designs on making history when he enrolled in the University of Texas' (UT) architecture program. That's precisely what occurred, however, upon his registration at UT just two days after a monumental Supreme Court decision (*Sweatt v. Painter*, June 5, 1950) opened the university's graduate and professional schools to African American students.

After his graduation in 1952, Chase became the first licensed African American architect in the state, and eventually established offices in Houston, Dallas, and Washington, D.C. Now retired, the Houston-based Chase enjoyed a successful career, highlighted by his accomplishments in the area of Civil Rights and a 40-year legacy of modern design.

Chase was born in Annapolis, Md., in 1925 and in 1948 he received a bachelor's degree in architectural engineering from Virginia's Hampton Institute (now Hampton University). Chase's interest in the Deep South, where he felt there would be more opportunity to build, resulted in the Hampton Institute's placement office arranging for his teaching position at the Crescent Institute in Austin.

"The East was built up so well, they didn't need anything—it was the South that needed construction," Chase said in a 2004 interview.

Chase was determined to earn an advanced academic degree and join the American Institute of Architects (AIA). In 1950, Hugh McMath, chairman of UT's School of Architecture, encouraged him to apply, even though the university was still



John S. Chase enrolled at the University of Texas on June 7, 1950, two days after a landmark desegregation ruling.

segregated. After graduating, Chase applied to numerous firms but could not find work because of his race. He ultimately opened his own firm upon receiving his Texas architectural license in 1952.

That same year, Chase was hired as an assistant professor of architectural drafting at Texas Southern University. Through the 1970s, he designed many of the buildings on that campus, as well as its master plan.

Influenced by noted architect Frank Lloyd Wright, Chase designed numerous buildings in Austin and Houston, mostly in the modern modes that he preferred. During his early career, Chase networked by attending African American churches. He would visit the pastors on Fridays with his thesis, titled "Progressive Architecture for Churches," and the pastor would

introduce him and his wife to the congregation the following Sunday.

"They stood you up in front of that church and all of a sudden you've just met 500 to 1,000 people," Chase said. "You'd be amazed at how much work came out of that."

Chase recalled that this method of interaction led to a large number of commissions, including the International Longshoremen Union building in Galveston. One of his earliest designs was the 1952 Teachers State Association of Texas building in Austin, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. The building served as headquarters for Texas' African American teachers' association during the Jim Crow era through 1966. Other notable early designs are Chase's David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Austin (1959), with its dramatic upward-sloping sanctuary roof, and nearby raised-ranch houses built for Irene Thompson (1962) and Della Phillips (1964).

His later projects included churches and schools, nursing homes, libraries, and community buildings, including Houston's International Airport Crash Fire and Rescue Station, Townview Magnet High School, and the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia (designed in 1995, but never built). In his professional career, Chase received several honors, including election as a Fellow of the AIA, and appointment to the Commission of Fine Arts by President Jimmy Carter in 1980. ★

Photo: Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. Identifier: di\_04081. Title: John Chase at UT. Source: UT Texas Student Publications, Inc. Photographs.

# 1960s Architecture is Reaching 50

## Notable Mid-Century Projects Now Eligible for Texas' National Register

*By Charles Peveto*  
*State National Register Program Historian*

As modern architecture ages, the term “Mid-Century” has come into its own as a description of both style and era. In addition to a growing appreciation for their pioneering styles and experimental technologies, buildings from the 1960s are also becoming eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and many properties have already been listed.

The framework for our current historic preservation laws also dates to this decade, with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. With it came the development of the NRHP and other federal programs we rely on today to identify and protect significant resources. These regulations and programs were created in part as a reaction to the loss of historic resources to urban renewal and expansive highway development. Preservationists are now faced with trying to understand and protect that era's history.

Last fall, the Westgate Tower in Austin, a next-door neighbor to the State Capitol building, was listed in the NRHP. Designed in 1962 by Edward Durell Stone, the mixed-use Westgate project was immediately controversial due to its close proximity to the Capitol and because it involved demolition of an important Abner Cook residence. Cook designed many of Austin's iconic early structures, including the Governor's Mansion, which is just one block south of the Westgate project. The Westgate's location, combined with its 25-story height, eventually led to the creation of the Capitol View Corridor protection law enacted by the Texas Legislature and is still in effect today.



Austin's Westgate Tower was designed in 1962.

“The Westgate Tower was one of many postwar projects across Texas that demolished beloved structures or even entire neighborhoods,” says the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Gregory Smith, state coordinator of the National Register program. “In Austin, the Westgate's architecture and the talent of its designer Edward Durell Stone eventually gained appreciation, especially within the architectural community.”

Although a small percentage of 1950s–'60s buildings in Texas were of similar prominence and designed by noteworthy architects, projects of this distinction across the state are now being recognized as historically significant. In Dallas, 3525 Turtle Creek, a high-end residential tower designed by Howard Meyer in the late 1950s, was listed in the NRHP in 2007. Houston Mod is an organization

dedicated to surveying significant 1960s architecture in the Houston area, including the Astrodome, designed by Robert J. Minchew.

In 2006, the National Park Service determined that the Astrodome, which opened in 1965, is eligible for listing in the NRHP before it reaches the standard requirement of 50 years in age because it represents technological advances in construction. However, finding a new use for the building—once hailed as the Eighth Wonder of the World—has been a challenge, leaving it in danger of demolition.

Recently in San Antonio, Mid-Tex Mod, the Austin-San Antonio chapter of DOCOMOMO (International Working Party for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement) conducted a tour of the remaining structures of the 1968 HemisFair, the first world's fair held in the southwestern United States. Two of the iconic structures from this important event have been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP: the Tower of the Americas and the Institute of Texan Cultures, which originally served as the State of Texas pavilion at the fair.

Projects like world's fairs often negatively impact neighborhoods and existing resources, and recognition of what was once there is key to representing the stories accurately. Taking into account current public sentiment but also understanding the history of a site can help communities find ways of repurposing buildings. Only 24 of the 129 HemisFair structures remain, but now—almost 50 years later—these HemisFair resources are well-known landmarks in San Antonio.

Many of the HemisFair structures were designed by the firm of O'Neil Ford, a leader in modern architecture in Texas. San Antonio's growth and plans for higher density in its downtown may require the original HemisFair complex



Photo: Jenni Minner

to be reconfigured and repurposed, so the remaining '60s structures will need to be assessed and a best use determined.

The local architectural community has a vision of repurposing the important O'Neil Ford buildings into modern-day use while preserving the integrity of these significant structures for future generations. Jenni Minner, president of Mid-Tex Mod, recently conducted a tour for 75 people at the HemisFair and received a positive reaction from the group about the preservation of these structures.

"The tour was an opportunity to raise awareness about the significance of the social history and modern architecture of HemisFair '68," said Minner,

noting that the fair's theme was The Confluence of the Civilizations in the Americas, and its buildings and artwork celebrate cultural diversity and progress. "I think the most important part of the tour was bringing together different individuals and organizations to honor the legacy of the fair. It elevates the importance of finding creative and sustainable ways of incorporating the artwork and architecture of the fair into plans for the future of HemisFair Park."

Minner adds that the artwork in many buildings of this era should also be considered an important resource. Within the HemisFair complex, works by Carlos Merida, Juan O'Gorman, and Fred Samuelson are masterpieces that commemorate a shared heritage.

As Mid-Century architecture comes of age, preservation techniques will require adaptation. During this period of architecture, there were many experimental materials used in construction. As buildings from this era undergo restoration, there will be a need to identify and implement new preservation guidelines for these types of properties. Many materials during this period are no longer manufactured today.

"It's important to retain character-defining features on significant buildings of the modern period just as it is for earlier resources," said Kim Barker of the THC's Architecture

Division. "But preserving the character and integrity of modern-era spaces that are comprised of mass-produced building materials may require a different approach than 19th-century resources with their high degree of craftsmanship. This is something that we'll continue to explore as modern-era buildings age and become historically significant."

Preservation at its core is an attempt to interpret and protect the significant resources of our past—those that have a story to tell, whether an aspect of a community's history, a technological milestone, a tangible tie to someone important, or a way people lived in a bygone era. As we study the last half of the 20th century, we will begin to understand which places best convey these real stories and which designs ultimately stand the test of time.

For more information on the groups documenting these resources in Texas, visit [midtexasmod.blogspot.com](http://midtexasmod.blogspot.com) and [www.houstonmod.org](http://www.houstonmod.org). ★



Photo: Jenni Minner



Photo: Jessica Anderson

Top: A glass mosaic tile mural in the San Antonio Convention Center created for HemisFair '68 by Carlos Merida. At left: the Confluence Theater (foreground) and Tower of the Americas. Above: A view of the Tower's observation deck from the ground floor.

# TRADITIONAL TEX-MEX

Authentic Food Is On the Menu for Rio Grande Valley's Heritage Travelers

By Andy Rhodes  
The Medallion *Managing Editor*

Culinary customs are often a matter of taste, but temperatures may rise when opinions differ about the proper "traditional" approach.

Take, for example, the modest *molcajete*, a staple in kitchens of South Texas' Rio Grande Valley. The customary Mexican mortar and pestle, a stone tool used for grinding ingredients dating to the Aztecs of 4000 B.C., stirs up good-natured disagreements among an assembled group of Cameron County historians and regional food connoisseurs.

"My grandmother taught us how to cure the *molcajete* with grains of uncooked rice—you have to grind them into the stone just right to make sure it's smooth and ready," says Sandra Maxwell. "My sister and I fought over who would get our family's *molcajete*. Just talking about it makes me think of the sound of peppercorns breaking."

"That's not what we used," responds Gloria Escareno with a slightly disapproving look. "Our family in Mexico was very poor, so the only thing we had to cure our *molcajete* was corn."



Photos by  
Andy Rhodes

My grandmother would smash it into the inside of the bowl and toss the powder aside. That's the best way to do it."

Regardless of the curing approach, the group wholeheartedly agrees that a *molcajete* is the only effective way to prepare traditional Mexican spice blends, typically including cumin, pepper, and garlic. Although a blender or food processor would be quicker and easier, the time and effort needed for the old-fashioned approach is worthwhile due to the resulting fresh and bold flavors.

Traditional foods and authentic recipes are significant draws for heritage travelers visiting the Rio Grande Valley, where people from across Texas and the United States seek distinctive cultural experiences at historic restaurants and attractions throughout the region.

"Not as many people are going to Mexico anymore, so heritage travelers are flocking to the Texas Tropical Trail Region to get a taste of the real places that tell the real stories of South Texas," says Teresa Caldwell, state coordinator of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Heritage Trails Program. "Culinary tourism is emerging as a popular travel trend, and the Rio Grande Valley is ripe with authentic experiences for people interested in traditional food and culture."

Brownsville resident Isabel Vezetti and her husband Bob, a former vice chair of the Cameron County Historical Commission, have witnessed an upswing in the region's draw as a culinary destination. As a coordinator of Brownsville's annual Charro Days cultural festival (see page 9), Vezetti notes the food tents and booths are continually expanding and drawing enthusiastic crowds.

"People always talk about the food and which booth has the best dishes or most authentic preparation," she says. "The whole culture around here is so intertwined with food—it's just amazing how important it is."

Indeed, the gathering of historians and culinary experts reveals the strong connection between heritage and food.



Each person in the group references their grandmother's cooking and recipes that date back multiple generations to Mexican homesteads. When asked about documented family recipes, most of the group members shake their heads and smile knowingly.

"I don't have a printed recipe that's been passed along through the years because it never had to be written down. We just grew up making it, so we knew it by memory," says Magdalena Alcalá. "We never went to the fancy stores to buy measuring cups and special tablespoons or teaspoons. We just put the ingredients in the palm of our hand and knew how it looked by eye."

Maria Enriqueta Yzaguirre agrees, adding, "You just go by look and feel and color. My grandmother always started with pinches of ingredients, then tasted to see if it needed a little bit

more—you can always add something, but you can't always remove it."

Discussion turns to traditional dishes and favorite family recipes. Escareno recalls her great-grandparents' custom of hanging small strips of meat to dry (*carne seca*) in a birdcage with an overlying screen to repel flies. Sometimes, the meat would be from a goat (*cabrito*), which could be served as *carne seca* in a soup, roasted over a pit, or as *cabrito en sangre*, a traditional stew using the goat's blood as the base for a savory spice-laden gravy.

Joe Gavito, the City of Brownsville's heritage officer, adds, "My relatives would always have a goat, and I remember feeding it and playing with it. Inevitably, I'd come back to look for it, and when I asked where it was, they'd say 'You just ate it for dinner!'"

Other favorite regional recipes passed down through the generations include *barbacoa* (meat from different

Above: Isabel Vezetti of Brownsville displays a plate of traditional Mexican-based cuisine from the Rio Grande Valley.

portions of a cow's skull, roasted in an earthen pit to maximize tenderness and flavor), *enchiladas* (with a hearty red sauce created from an ancho chile pepper and corn tortillas dipped and rolled with cheese), and *chiles rellenos* (meat, potatoes, vegetables, and raisins stuffed in a poblano pepper, a tradition traced to the Spanish colonial era).

Though most of the recipes associated with these traditional foods and regional Tex-Mex restaurants can be traced to Mexico, a Rio Grande Valley original is on the menu at many Mexican-based eateries. According to Texas food expert Robb Walsh, who has contributed to National Public Radio, *Natural History* magazine, *Gourmet*, and the *Houston Press*, fajitas originated in the Valley and came to prominence when Mama Ninfa added them to the menu at her namesake Houston restaurant.

In his influential *Tex-Mex Cookbook*, Walsh recounts Ninfa claiming fajitas were an old family recipe adapted from grilled meat from their backyard grill in the rural Valley and served with flour tortillas and condiments. Walsh also documents Pharr's Round Up Restaurant as the first venue to serve fajitas as a menu item nearly 40 years ago, with the name derived from the Spanish word *faja*, meaning belt (referencing the flank steak).

A discussion of traditional Rio Grande Valley foods would be incomplete without mentioning *tamales*. The savory corn masa-based items date to the Mayans circa 1200 B.C., and generate animated discussion about the customs and procedures involved with their preparation.

Although specific methods of gathering and organizing ingredients can vary slightly by family, most agree about the basic method of preparation and the importance of having a system in place with different people—typically grandmothers, mothers, and aunts—filling roles in an assembly-line process.

Nostalgic stories and knowing laughter emerge when discussing details such as effective silk removal from the corn husks ("I'd get in trouble if someone thought there was a hair in one of the tamales"), testing if a masa ball will float in water, and its readiness as a cooked *gordita* ("That's my favorite part of the entire process: it's the best thing I eat all year").

"It's an art—everyone has a specialty skill, and grandmother has the final quality control," says Vezetti,



Clockwise from above: traditional dishes (from left) such as *pan dulces* and *huevos rancheros* are favorites at historic restaurants throughout the Valley.



adding that up to 100 dozen *tamales* can often be made over three days. "It turns into a party, a real ritual with music playing and 25 or 30 people in a house dancing around and gossiping."

Alcala agrees, adding "The experience is just so fun of having everybody in a room, doing a traditional

activity, working on food together. It's a very important family tradition for all of us."

## EATS IN THE VALLEY

Demographic reports indicate 89 percent of Valley residents claim Hispanic heritage, so it's not surprising that many restaurants in this region specialize in Mexican and Tex-Mex food. Although the vast majority are new establishments or even decades-old local chains, several restaurants have stood the test of time and can officially claim historic status.

One of McAllen's most beloved Hispanic restaurants is **Rex Café** (321 S. 17th St., 956.686.9074), which opened in 1947 in the city's then-segregated Mexican-American district. It has since thrived as a community stalwart under the original family's ownership. Generations of



loyal customers' lives have been intertwined with Rex Café, with regular visits for the bakery's delectable *pan dulces* and hearty *huevos rancheros*. One of the café's specialties is the *borracho*, a grilled roll topped with refried beans, cheese, and vegetables or meat.

"This is a true family establishment—people celebrate milestones here because it's a natural place to meet up and enjoy time together over their favorite food," says owner Baldamar Guerrero Jr., whose uncle was the café's founder. "Everyone knows each other—they even go to the weddings and funerals of other customers. Everyone knows the waiters, too. One has been here 35 years, another 25 years. It's like one big connected family."

Guerrero adds that the consistent approach has been important to the café's success. Most of the recipes haven't changed in 65 years, and he has continued his family's policy of learning "from the bottom on up."

"All of us started working here as dishwashers, mopping floors, waiting tables, and cooking," he says. "My son is 5 years old, and he might be the next generation to run the restaurant some day. He likes coming in here and talking to the customers. He's a real natural."

Sixty miles east in Brownsville, **The Vermillion** (115 Paredes Line Rd., 956.542.9893) boasts a 75-year tradition of serving regional cuisine to similarly loyal customers. Although the restaurant isn't exclusively Tex-Mex, many of the Mexican-inspired dishes have been served for nearly 50 years. The Vermillion was in an isolated rural area when it opened in 1937, and photos from the era advertise the kitchen's tacos and grilled meats.

"It was sort of the Wild West out here, so Mr. Vermillion

At left: In the 1940s, the Vermillion's original owner and building were on Brownsville's frontier outskirts. Below: Current owner Dan Davidson displays the restaurant's popular *enchilada* and *fajita* plates.

carried a pistol in his belt just in case things got ugly," says Dan Davidson, the restaurant's longtime owner.

Davidson's father bought the Vermillion nearly 50 years ago, and the restaurant still uses his savory *enchilada* recipe, which features the authentic *chile con carne* flavor from freshly ground ancho peppers. Davidson claims the dish is so popular that customers have craved it for decades and found it exactly as they remembered.

"We haven't found it necessary to change most of our recipes, so we don't," he says. "We've

made a living off of our good hospitality and food, and I'm proud to say The Vermillion is an important place in the lives of many Brownsville residents."

Brownsville is also home to several authentic *tortillerias*, where visitors can order a stack of freshly made *tortillas* and sample traditional regional food like *carnitas* or *barbacoa*. Notable options include **Capistran Tortillas** (1305 Lincoln St., 956.541.3053) and **Chuy's Super Barbecue & Tortillas** (1035 Palm Blvd, 956.541.8031).

For those in search of genuine Mexican-inspired food like *chiles rellenos* and cheese *enchiladas*, consider visiting **El Torito**

(625 N. Expressway, 956.541.4426) or

**Vera's Backyard Bar-B-Que** (2404 Southmost Rd., 956.546.4159). Note:

as with the *tortillerias*, a familiarity with speaking Spanish is helpful at these locations. English is primarily spoken at another longtime local favorite, **Los Camperos**, which recently opened a new restaurant (2500 N. Expressway, 956.546.8172), and at the aforementioned **Vermillion**.

Brownsville's significant heritage tourism opportunities have been associated with several THC initiatives, including a 2011 First Lady's Texas Treasures Award, Military Sites Program projects at

Palmito Ranch Battlefield National Historic Landmark, the agency's 2010 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation (presented to residents Frank and Mary Yturria), and Cameron County's participation in the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. For information about these endeavors and other heritage tourism opportunities in the area, order a free copy of the THC's *Texas Tropical Trail Region* travel guide by calling 866.276.6219 or visiting [www.texastimetravel.com](http://www.texastimetravel.com). ★

## UNA FIESTA GRANDE

The ultimate celebration of regional heritage takes place at Brownsville's Charro Days, a multi-national event honoring "two nations, twin cultures, dual traditions." This year's festival—February 19-26—will be even grander since it marks the event's 75th anniversary.

Charro Days draws nearly 100,000 people annually for events ranging from traditional costumed dances to a colorful illuminated parade to dozens of booths offering authentic cuisine. Although the bridge spanning the Rio Grande is no longer opened for unrestricted access to and from Matamoros, Mexico, the festival remains a significant cultural tradition in the Rio Grande Valley.

For more information about Charro Days, including event schedules, history, photos, sponsors, and participating musical acts and food vendors, visit [www.charrodaysfiesta.com](http://www.charrodaysfiesta.com) or call 956.542.4245.



# High and Dry: Texas' Submerged Shipwreck Sites Exposed

By Amy Borgens, State Marine Archeologist

Texas' extreme drought has decimated crops, livestock, and landscapes across the state. But another affected resource, historic shipwrecks, is causing concern among Texas' marine archeologists.

In particular, the drought has underscored the potential for environmental and man-made impacts to archeological sites, including shipwrecks, exposed by the low water levels. Local media have reported recovery of artifacts from these exposed sites; however, incidents are also occurring at coastal sites uncovered due to natural shoreline erosion or severe erosion from coastal storms and hurricanes.

Submerged archeological sites are invaluable reminders of Texas' important maritime past. These historic sites are the wrecks of the sailing vessels, steamers, and ferries that were once integral for moving people and freight throughout Texas and other ports. The types of underwater sites are diverse and numerous—more than 1,800 vessels have been reported lost in state waters, and an estimated 300 of these are in rivers and river mouths. More than 80 shipwreck sites have been investigated to date.

With a European/Anglo-American presence along the Gulf Coast for more than 500 years, Texas has the oldest shipwrecks in the United States (1554) and, with *La Belle*, the oldest verified French colonial shipwreck in the New World. The potential for discovery of visible historic shipwrecks and structures along Texas beaches and rivers is certain; in fact, many have already been reported and investigated. They include early 19th-century shipwrecks, a Civil War torpedo raft, several Civil War-era steamboats, a late 19th-century scow schooner, and World War I-era steamships.

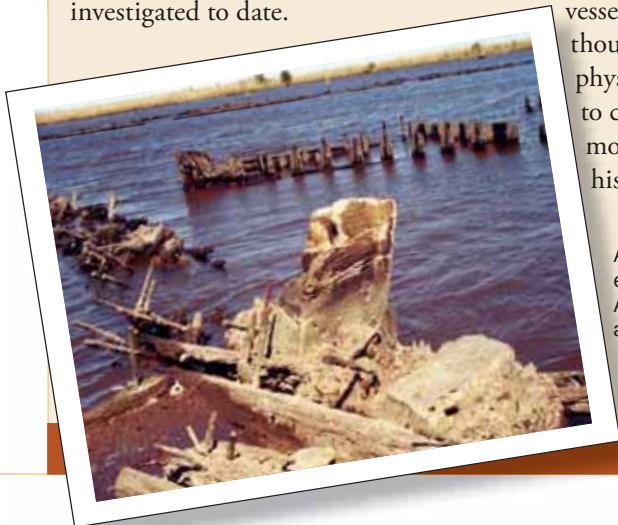
Two early 19th-century wrecks buried in a South Texas beach are periodically exposed after storms and sometimes even at extreme low tide. These wrecks have been damaged by beach-cleaning activities and known looting. These vessels' remains, both designated State Archeological Landmarks, are similar in size (circa 80-feet long) and believed to be sailing vessels, possibly schooners, of the type that were predominantly used in maritime trade activity in the gulf. In the past, one of these shipwrecks has been identified as the Mexican naval vessel *Montezuma/Moctezuma* (1836), though there is no documentary or physical evidence from the site itself to confirm this. The shipwreck may more likely be one of the nearly 35 historic commercial sailing vessels

that were also lost in the area during this period.

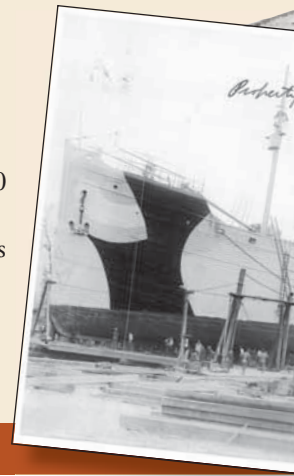
Another example of a common, sometimes-underappreciated coastal trade vessel is the scow-schooner *Lake Austin*. This 69-foot watercraft was built in Matagorda Bay in 1881 and grounded near Port Aransas during a 1903 storm. In 1966, the remains of *Lake Austin* eroded out of the beach. The wreck was dug by county employees from the sand using heavy equipment, and the vessel's remarkable preservation enabled it to be identified by its visible registration number.

This discovery preceded the creation of the Antiquities Code of Texas and the laws that would otherwise have protected this historic resource. Once interest in the shipwreck waned, it was burned on the beach as a perceived traffic hazard. *Lake Austin* is believed to be the best example of a well-preserved Gulf scow schooner in the northern Gulf of Mexico and the only archeological example of one produced locally.

Other known archeological sites that become visible following extreme weather conditions include the wrecks of river steamboats and World War I-era steamships. The largest collection of investigated wreck sites in Texas date to the post-World War I era. Approximately 30 wrecks built for the U.S. Shipping Board's Emergency Fleet Corporation were



At left: Wreckage from a World War I-era steamship in the Sabine River.  
At right: The steamships as they appeared when built in Beaumont in the early 1900s.



abandoned in East Texas rivers after the end of the war.

Built in Beaumont and Orange shipyards, these steamships—some of which likely were never completed—were left along the riverbanks and sometimes burned. Many of these shipwrecks are visible when the rivers are low and, when submerged, pose a danger to boaters. Though these types of sites are typically marked as hazards, many historic wrecks are still undiscovered and may pose a danger to boaters during low water levels, especially those occasioned by drought.

“Shipwrecks and other archeological sites are non-renewable resources, and removal of artifacts from these sites without proper documentation can result in an invaluable loss of information,” explains Pat-Mercado Allinger, state archeologist and director of the Texas Historical Commission’s (THC) Archeology Division.

Archeological resources on state-owned land and submerged properties are protected by state and federal laws, depending on the type of shipwreck or project. Mercado-Allinger issues a strong

reminder that the removal of artifacts or intentional damage to these archeological sites can result in fines and other penalties.

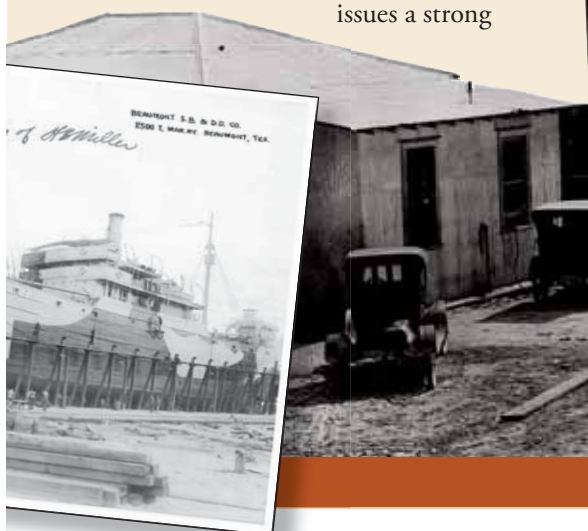
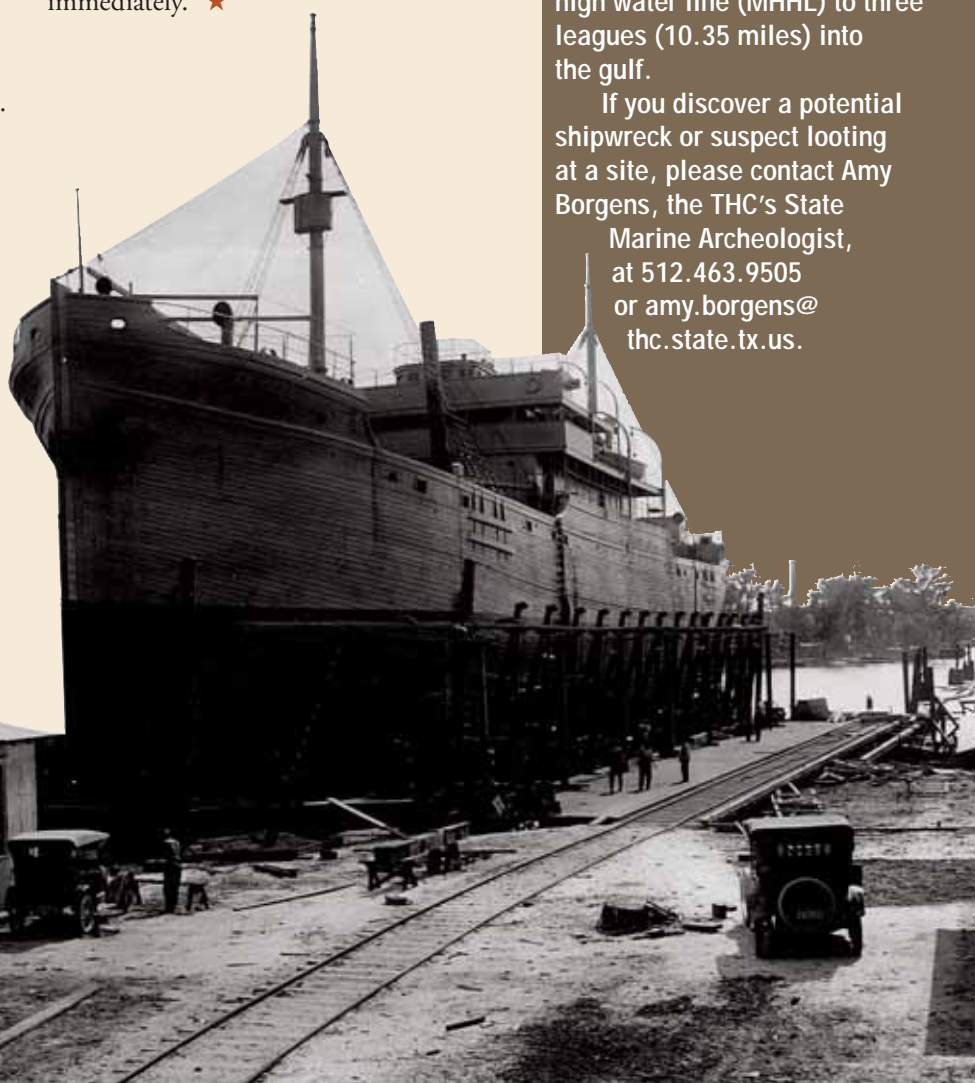
“Recognizing, reporting, and protecting these finds is integral to preserving our shared cultural heritage for the historic records and for future public benefit,” Mercado-Allinger says. “If you know of any of these important sites, please contact the THC immediately.” ★

Photos: National Archives, Record Group 32, Records of the United States Shipping Board, Photographs of Yards, Vessels, Dry Docks, and Marine Railways, 1915-1921, Box 11. Image provided courtesy of Atkins North America, Inc.

State protection of underwater cultural resources extends to all archeological sites on state-owned submerged properties and includes structures, shipwrecks, and prehistoric/historic burial remains.

Submerged lands include most navigable waterways (rivers, bays, etc.) and the coastal zone extending from the mean higher high water line (MHHW) to three leagues (10.35 miles) into the gulf.

If you discover a potential shipwreck or suspect looting at a site, please contact Amy Borgens, the THC’s State Marine Archeologist, at 512.463.9505 or [amy.borgens@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:amy.borgens@thc.state.tx.us).





# An Eternal Gift

To Support the Work of the Texas Historical Commission,  
Today and Tomorrow...

There's no doubt about it. Money makes better programs and services possible.

That's why it's essential for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to have funding to function into the future and financial support to grow within an ever-changing environment. The THC's operating budget will allow it to function, but it's the Friends of the THC's Texas Heroes Endowment fund that allows the agency to fulfill its mission with the highest quality programs and services.



Suppose you would like to ensure your favorite charitable organization receives \$1,000 every year, even after your lifetime. Let's say the charitable organization spends 4 percent of its endowment each year. (This doesn't mean it earns a total return of only 4 percent,

only that it spends that amount; it will reinvest the difference to offset inflation.)

To calculate the amount you need to perpetuate your annual gift, divide the annual gift amount, \$1,000, by the amount called for in the spending policy, 4 percent, and you get \$25,000. So, contributing just \$25,000 can continue your \$1,000 annual gift indefinitely. And, you can pledge your \$25,000 gift over five years!

Here's the best part: If the value of the endowment grows beyond the spending amount, so does the income. For example, with a return of 10 percent in one year and with only 4 percent as the amount spent, the other 6 percent is reinvested in the endowment. By the second year, the value of the fund is 6 percent higher, or \$26,500, and the spendable "gift" from the fund is \$1,060.

## HOW TO FUND YOUR ENDOWMENT GIFT

You can support the THC's endowment with an outright gift of cash or securities in one payment, or a pledge spread out for up to five years. Endowment gifts can

also be created through a bequest or other gift-planning methods.

You can contribute to the Texas Heroes Endowment, an unrestricted endowment to support areas of greatest need and unique opportunities at the THC, with a gift of any amount. Or, you can fund a specially named endowment in honor or memory of someone special or to support a particular program with a gift of \$25,000 or more. Donors of \$25,000 or more are recognized as both Texas Heroes, for their unrestricted gift and as lifetime members of the Stetson Society, a special group of donors who have given \$25,000 or more to support any of THC's projects or programs or as an unrestricted gift.



## HOW IT WORKS

An endowment program is simply the time-honored method of allocating certain gifts to an investment fund. This fund is invested to earn income each year, and as the principal grows, so does the income. A small amount is used to support the THC's work, but the balance always remains invested to perpetuate the fund.

When you make a gift to the Friends of the THC's endowment fund, it can either be made now or in the future (such as through a bequest in a will or living trust). Either way, your one gift can become a legacy of annual gifts long into the future.

## ASK FOR DETAILS

Endowments are a conservative and intelligent attempt to guarantee the future of the THC's mission and to enhance the quality of opportunities for service. And, they allow you to leave a legacy. For more information, contact Lisa Avra, executive director of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission at 512.936.2241. ★

# Preservation in Paris

## Restored Sam Bell Maxey House Reopens to the Public

By Andy Rhodes  
The Medallion Managing Editor

When he was 35 years old, Paris attorney Samuel Bell Maxey was elected to the Texas Senate, but the state seceded from the United States before he could serve a day in office. When Maxey, who served as his Confederate regiment's major general, attempted to resurrect his legal career after the Civil War, he encountered a minor hitch: to continue his law practice or to hold public office, he needed a personal pardon from President Andrew Johnson.

After many unsuccessful attempts, Maxey enlisted the assistance of his former West Point classmate Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, who recommended his pardon. His citizenship rights were ultimately restored, and he eventually went on to a successful run for the U.S. Senate. With Maxey's legal practice officially in the clear, he began collecting fees from clients, allowing him to build his stately house on Church Street, which was completed in December 1868.

Nearly 145 years later, the house, one of 20 historic sites operated by the Texas Historical Commission (THC), has been preserved after more than a year of careful restoration work. Major projects included extensive repainting; repairs to framing, wood siding, doors, and windows; stabilization of the pier-and-beam foundation; roof replacement; and the installation of a new central heating and air conditioning system.

"This restoration project will allow visitors to experience what life was like for the Maxey family in Paris, Texas more than a century ago," said Donna Williams, director of the

THC's Historic Sites Division. Williams adds that a new interpretive plan will identify additional improvements to help tell the real stories of Maxey's life in the stately High Victorian Italianate home.



Maxey and his wife Marilda raised their family and hosted many distinguished guests in the house, which was commonly regarded as a social center of Paris. For the Maxeys, the idea of family was not limited to direct kinship, and the house was always open to extended family and friends for holidays and throughout the year.

Maxey's great-nephew, Sam Bell Maxey Long, and his wife Lala inherited the home in 1908. They began extensive remodeling in 1911, making several additions to the back of the home, including a breakfast room, kitchen, first-floor laundry room, and upstairs sewing room.

Family members lived continuously in the home for 99 years until 1967, when they donated the

home to the city of Paris. In March 1971, the Sam Bell Maxey House was officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places and transferred to state ownership in 1976.



The 1868 Sam Bell Maxey House was recently restored (above) to address serious deterioration of the building's exterior. Left: Site namesake Samuel Bell Maxey.



"This wonderful home stands as a testament to the strong relationships between family members and the Paris community," said Kaitlin Ammon, site

manager. "We're proud to be able to keep these historic memories preserved and alive for visitors to experience."

The Maxey House is open for guided house tours Tuesday–Sunday, from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Groups of 10 or more may reserve a group tour in advance. For more information, go to [www.visitsbmh.com](http://www.visitsbmh.com) or call 903.785.5716. ★

# Marker Program Celebrates 50 Years



Historical markers, like this one commemorating the Cologne community in South Texas, document the real stories of Texas history.

This year, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) is celebrating 50 years of placing official Texas Historical Markers in historically significant locations throughout the state. Historical markers have been part of the Texas landscape since 1936, when the Texas Centennial Commission placed more than 1,100 markers and monuments to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Texas Revolution and its establishment of the Republic of Texas.

The current Official Texas Historical Marker Program dates to 1962. Since then, it has been a popular means of interpreting local and state history while encouraging heritage tourism.

Currently, more than 15,000 Official Texas Historical Markers throughout Texas commemorate everything from the history and architecture of buildings, to events that changed the course of local and state history, to individuals who made a lasting contribution to the state. For more information about the marker program, visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us) or contact the THC's History Programs Division at 512.463.5853.

## CENTER FOR TEXAS PUBLIC HISTORY OPENS IN SAN MARCOS

Texas State University history professors Lynn Denton and Dan Utley are overseeing a new research center in San Marcos to assist with historical study of the state.

Denton directs the facility, known as the Center for Texas Public History, and Utley, a former THC historian, serves as the center's chief historian. Faculty and students in the history department's graduate program in public history will staff the facility.

The Center for Texas Public History will offer expertise in museum work, oral history, and cultural resource management to government agencies, museums, county historical commissions, community organizations, and others that need help in researching and interpreting historical information for the public.

"We can do the work for organizations, we can train them to do the work, or we can partner with them in some way," explained Denton. "We can also partner with organizations such as historical commissions that are operating on tight budgets and could benefit from our help."

For more information about the services provided by the center, contact Denton at [pd16@txstate.edu](mailto:pd16@txstate.edu) or 512.245.2142.

## PRESERVATION SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN MARCH

Preserving Texas' historic and cultural past is a continuous challenge. To address these issues and promote Texas' historic resources, Preservation Texas, with support from the THC, will host a preservation summit March 22–23 at the State Capitol in Austin.

The event features guest speakers, interactive roundtable discussions, and the official announcement of the 2012 Texas' Most Endangered Places List. Preservationists are invited to join advocates and leaders from around the state to share stories and challenges, discuss potential solutions to pressing preservation issues, and network with specialists from several communities and backgrounds.

For information about registration and a detailed schedule, visit [www.preservationtexas.org](http://www.preservationtexas.org) or call 512.472.0102.

## THC'S ATLAS PUTS HISTORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The THC's improved Atlas now features nearly 300,000 site records, including data on Official Texas Historical Markers and National Register of Historic Places properties in Texas. Information is also available about historic courthouses, museums, and sawmills across the state.

Users can search by historic designation, keyword, county, address, or site name to get instant access to detailed descriptions, historic photographs, and interactive maps to discover the real places that tell the real stories of Texas history.

The Atlas is accessible at [atlas.thc.state.tx.us](http://atlas.thc.state.tx.us).

# Organizational Impact

## CHCs Provide Opportunities to Educate and Influence

By Amy Hammons, County Historical Commission Outreach Coordinator

Preservationists are passionate about history. We have received many calls from County Historical Commissions (CHC) related to personalities and differences of opinion within their organization. Managing the ideas and actions of these committed volunteers can occasionally be challenging.



Sally Abbe of the Lubbock CHC provides a positive face for preservation.

For this reason, we recommend starting each year with a celebration of past accomplishments and the anticipation of new opportunities. This is an excellent time to initiate a discussion to help refocus CHC appointees on your mission and collective responsibilities. The following ideas may help.

First and foremost, remember a CHC's state statutory mission: To protect, preserve, and promote cultural and historic resources in its county. While making organizational decisions, keep in mind the following core values associated with a CHC's mission:

- Promote stewardship of cultural and historic resources.
- Foster positive impressions for your CHC and for preservation.
- Provide quality service to the public.
- Maintain respectful interaction with others.
- Encourage public participation in CHC activities.
- Share your preservation successes with each other and our partners.

In addition, be sure to take time to acknowledge ongoing challenges and

discuss proactive solutions to address issues. Among the most common frustrations for CHC members is managing interactions with the public.

While we cannot control how others handle information, we can control how we respond as individuals. It is critical that we support one another and remember that an individual's work and attitude reflects on the commission as a whole.

Due to the elevated profile of many CHC appointees, they are often interviewed and asked to comment publicly. This county-appointed position may result in scrutiny similar to that applied to other county officials, which means that what you say, write, or do can shape the public's perception of the CHC and the preservation movement as a whole.

Consider public exchanges as an opportunity to share your history with others and let them know more about the important work accomplished by CHCs. Every time you are quoted, post a comment on the Internet, or publish a newsletter, you are granted a golden opportunity to educate, influence, and enrich lives through history. ★

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### Our Mission

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment, and economic benefit of present and future generations.



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

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## WHERE ON EARTH...IN TEXAS

**Know your Texas history?** Put your skills to the test by identifying the pictured site! The first three people who correctly identify the location will receive prizes from the THC's Texas Heritage Trails Program and be named in the next issue of *The Medallion*. Send your answer to: *The Medallion*, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276; via fax to 512.463.6374; or email to [medallion@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:medallion@thc.state.tx.us). Limit one prize annually per contestant.

Need a clue? This church was designed by German architect Dietrich Rulfs in 1914. A white property owner financed the land and building to the African American congregation, a notable cooperation between the races in East Texas at the time.



Answer to the photo from the last issue: This small building is the powder magazine at Fort Richardson in Jacksboro. Its small vents and arched roof were specifically designed to control the potential bombardment of explosives resulting from an errant spark or flame.

Congratulations to the first three readers who submitted the correct answer: Ted Andreas Jr. of Killeen, Eli Lopez of Killeen, and Sandra Osborne of Grandview. Thanks to all participants! ★

